

and Jewish culture in areas of our Nation where Americans have had little or no interaction with members of the Jewish community. Given that anti-Semitism unfortunately remains prevalent throughout the country, it is more important than ever that we work to break down barriers and address ignorance and intolerance, which too often leads to anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and hate.

I am proud to stand with the American Jewish Community during the month of May to highlight past achievements and the ongoing contributions of a community that cares deeply about the well-being and future of this Nation. I urge all of my colleagues as well as the American people to join me in recognizing the myriad of contributions of the American Jewish community throughout this month and to take concrete steps to observe JAHM.

RECOGNIZING THE DEPARTMENT
OF INTERIOR 2008 HONOR AWARD
RECIPIENTS

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding group of men and women in Northern Virginia. Each year, the Department of the Interior recognizes individuals who have contributed immensely to their departments with the Honor Awards Ceremony.

There are several types of Honor Awards that can be awarded to an employee: the Distinguished Service Award, the Safety Award, and the Valor Award. The Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals that have gone above and beyond expectations and contributed to the Department. The Safety Award recognizes safety and health employees who performed outstanding service and played an important role in the Department. The Valor Award is given to individuals that demonstrated courage when they faced dangerous situations.

It is with great pride that we enter into the record the names of the recipients of the 2008 Honor Awards. Receiving the Distinguished Service Award: Ms. Barbara L. Chadwick; Mr. Robert Labelle; Mr. David Bama; Mr. Bruce Sheaffer; and The Safety Award: Ms. Louis Rowe.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who serve in the Department of Interior. Their efforts, made on behalf of the American public, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. We ask our colleagues to join us in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN
JOHN CONYERS, JR.

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for H. Res. 1134, sup-

porting the goals and ideals of Mental Health Month. This legislation applauds the hard work of practitioners and national and community organizations in promoting mental health awareness, and supports improving the overall quality of life for those with mental illness. H. Res. 1134 also supports the findings of the President's Commission on Mental Health that the nation's failure to prioritize mental health is a national tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, mental health is no less important than physical health. In fact, as science is proving, mental health and physical health are intertwined in complex ways that are only beginning to be understood. The relationship between depression and heart disease is just one example of the inherent symbiosis of psychiatric and somatic illnesses.

Just as the heart is the organ upon which heart disease preys, the brain is the organ plagued by diseases of the mind. Likewise, death as a result of suicide is no less tragic than death secondary to a heart attack. Those suffering from severe psychiatric illness should not be held to a lesser standard of care than those suffering from physical illnesses.

Ensuring access to appropriate services is central to improving the quality of life for those with mental illness. The issue of mental health insurance parity, in my opinion, is a civil rights issue. Inequity of coverage with regard to mental health and substance abuse treatment benefits is tantamount to discrimination against the mentally ill, and it reinforces the strategy of insurance companies to deny care rather than provide care.

The mental health community scored a victory for its patients earlier this year when the House voted to pass H.R. 1424, the "Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007."

It has taken courage on the part of Congressmen like my colleague PATRICK KENNEDY to stand up to special interests and "do the right thing" when it comes to ending discrimination against the mentally ill and standing up to health insurance companies. There is still work to be done before a mental health insurance parity bill is signed into law. Hopefully, the bill will soon be reconciled into a form which will benefit psychiatric patients and end discrimination against the mentally ill.

Mr. Speaker, let us applaud the tireless work and unending determination of those fighting to improve the lives of the mentally ill. Let us also be reminded that there is much work to be done before the stigma associated with mental illness is ended, and the lives of those suffering from mental illness are valued as much as those suffering from other medical illnesses.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I wish to clarify my vote on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule for the Conference Report on S. Con. Res. 70, the Budget Resolution.

In the 109th Congress, the Florida delegation, on a bi-partisan basis, worked hard to protect Florida's environmental treasures. The

bill we achieved passage of, Public Law 109-432 (HR 6111), provided Florida with 125 mile protection off our coast. Furthermore, the legislation codified the ban on drilling within the "military mission line"—approximately 234 miles from Tampa—to provide even more protection for Florida's west coast through the year 2022. I strongly support the current ban. I also believe other states should have the right to search for energy if they wish to do so.

LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I sent the following letter to the President on May 13, 2008:

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington,
DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: I strongly urge you to reconsider Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's trip to the Czech Republic in early June to sign the European Ground-Based Mid-Course Defense, GMD, agreement. You have urged that the United States Ballistic Missile Defense System must include a European theatre to defend the country against an Iranian deployment of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, ICBM. I remain unconvinced that the arguments for the European GMD are valid.

The claim that the GMD will prevent a missile attack on the United States stands in contravention of the facts. Iran would have to overcome the many technical difficulties associated with development and deployment of long-range ballistic missiles. The longest range missile that Iran has tested is 1,600 kilometers. The straight line distance from Tehran to Washington, D.C. is 10,186 kilometers. The United States has never deployed a missile with this range. Our longest range missile, the MX or Peacekeeper, has a range of approximately 8,000 kilometers. Only five countries have deployed any long-range ballistic missiles to date.

In fact, it is conceivable that the U.S. will have its own technical difficulties to overcome before such a system can be proven viable. Two stage interceptors, proposed to be used in the European GMD, have never before been flight tested and therefore have no proven track record of viability. The Test and Evaluation department of the Pentagon cautions that many more tests under realistic conditions would be needed before conceding our capability to shoot down an offensive missile.

The citizens of the Czech Republic and Poland clearly reject the proposed agreement. Public opinion polls in the Czech Republic reflect strong opposition to the placement of the radar in their country. A poll conducted in the summer of 2007 shows that three-quarters of the population is calling for a public referendum on the proposed agreement. Opinion polls show that a consistent majority of the Polish public is opposed to the agreement and argues that they feel no particular threat from Iran. However, they indicated that the installment of interceptors would strain diplomatic relations with Russia. Similar concerns have been voiced about the prospect of Czech participation in the installment of the radar.

The GMD proposal has by some accounts exacerbated U.S.-Russia relations. The U.S. has shared information but not meaningfully